

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A machine readable medium containing executable computer program instructions which when executed by a data processing system cause said system to perform a method to set up software installed on a storage device of the data processing system, the method comprising:  
automatically searching in a plurality of locations for configuration information; and  
setting up the software installed on the storage device of the data processing system using first configuration information found in at least one of the plurality of locations.
2. The medium of claim 1, wherein the first configuration information comprises:  
a decryption key; and  
encrypted configuration information decryptable with the decryption key.
3. The medium of claim 2, wherein the decryption key and the encrypted configuration information are found in different locations of the plurality of locations.

4. The medium of claim 1, wherein the plurality of locations comprise one default location on a storage device attached fixedly and locally to the data processing system.
5. The medium of claim 4, wherein the plurality of locations further comprise one location in a removable medium locally attached to the data processing system.
6. The medium of claim 4, wherein the plurality of locations further comprise a remote location accessible to the data processing system through a network connection.
7. The medium of claim 1, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
8. The medium of claim 1, further comprising:  
determining a plurality of identifications of the data processing system;  
wherein said searching uses the plurality of identifications to find  
configuration information suitable for the data processing system.
9. The medium of claim 8, wherein the plurality of identifications comprise one of:

- a) a network address of the data processing system;
- b) a hostname of the data processing system;
- c) a hardware serial number of the data processing system; and
- d) a hardware address of a network interface device of the data processing system.

10. The medium of claim 8, wherein the plurality of identifications comprise one identification that matches any data processing system.

11. A machine readable medium containing executable computer program instructions which when executed by a data processing system cause said system to perform a method to set up software for the data processing system, the method comprising:  
querying a directory server to obtain configuration information; and  
setting up the software for the data processing system using the configuration information obtained from the directory server.

12. The medium of claim 11, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.

13. The medium of claim 12, further comprising:  
automatically obtaining a network address and an address of the directory server from a server on a local area network; and

configuring a network interface device of the data processing system to use  
the network address;

wherein said querying uses the address of the directory server and the  
network interface device which is configured to use the network  
address.

14. The medium of claim 12, wherein the configuration information comprises one of:
  - a) user account information;
  - b) time zone information;
  - c) keyboard information; and
  - d) a default language.
15. The medium of claim 12, wherein the configuration information comprises information specifying whether one or more services of the operating system shall be provided on the data processing system.
16. The medium of claim 11, wherein the configuration information comprises a license key for the software.
17. A machine readable medium containing executable computer program instructions which when executed by a data processing system cause said

system to perform a method to set up software installed on the data processing system, the method comprising:  
automatically searching for encrypted configuration information;  
determining a decryption key to decrypt the encrypted configuration information; and  
setting up the software installed on the data processing system using the decryption key and the encrypted configuration information.

18. The medium of claim 17, wherein the decryption key is communicated from a remote data processing system to the data processing system, and the decryption key is not stored on a file system of the data processing system.
19. The medium of claim 17, wherein said determining the decryption key comprises searching in a plurality of locations.
20. The medium of claim 19, wherein the plurality of locations comprise one of:
  - a) a removable storage device locally attached to the data processing system;
  - b) a predetermined location in a file volume in a file system of the data processing system; and
  - c) a database on a remote data processing system accessible to the data processing system through a network connection.

21. A method to set up software installed on a storage device of a data processing system, the method comprising:  
automatically searching in a plurality of locations for configuration information; and  
setting up the software installed on the storage device of the data processing system using first configuration information found in at least one of the plurality of locations.
22. The method of claim 21, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
23. The method of claim 21, wherein the plurality of locations are periodically searched.
24. The method of claim 21, wherein the plurality of locations comprise one default location on a storage device attached fixedly and locally to the data processing system.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein the plurality of locations further comprise one of:  
location in a removable medium locally attached to the data processing system; and

a directory server.

26. A method to set up software for a data processing system, the method comprising:  
querying a directory server to obtain configuration information; and  
setting up the software for the data processing system using the configuration information obtained from the directory server.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
28. The method of claim 27, further comprising:  
automatically obtaining a network address and an address of the directory server from a server on a local area network; and  
configuring a network interface device of the data processing system to use the network address;  
wherein said querying uses the address of the directory server and the network interface device which is configured to use the network address.
29. The method of claim 27, wherein the configuration information comprises information specifying whether one or more services of the operating system shall be provided on the data processing system.

30. A method to set up software installed on a data processing system, the method comprising:  
automatically searching for encrypted configuration information;  
determining a decryption key to decrypt the encrypted configuration information; and  
setting up the software installed on the data processing system using the decryption key and the encrypted configuration information.
31. The method of claim 30, wherein said determining the decryption key comprises searching in a plurality of locations.
32. A data processing system to set up software installed on a storage device of the data processing system, the data processing system comprising:  
means for automatically searching in a plurality of locations for configuration information; and  
means for setting up the software installed on the storage device of the data processing system using first configuration information found in at least one of the plurality of locations.
33. The data processing system of claim 32, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.



34. A data processing system to set up software, the data processing system comprising:  
means for querying a directory server to obtain configuration information;  
and  
means for setting up the software for the data processing system using the configuration information obtained from the directory server.
35. The data processing system of claim 34, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
36. The data processing system of claim 35, further comprising:  
means for automatically obtaining a network address and an address of the directory server from a server on a local area network; and  
means for configuring a network interface device of the data processing system to use the network address;  
wherein said means for querying uses the address of the directory server and the network interface device which is configured to use the network address.
37. The data processing system of claim 35, wherein the configuration information comprises information specifying whether one or more services

of the operating system shall be provided on the data processing systemd,  
and the one or more services comprise one of:

- a) email;
- b) printer;
- c) firewall;
- d) web;
- e) password;
- f) multimedia stream; and
- g) file sharing.

38. A data processing system to set up software, the data processing system comprising:  
means for automatically searching for encrypted configuration information;  
means for determining a decryption key to decrypt the encrypted  
configuration information; and  
means for setting up the software installed on the data processing system  
using the decryption key and the encrypted configuration  
information.
39. The data processing system of claim 38, wherein the decryption key is  
communicated from a remote data processing system to the data processing  
system.

40. A data processing system, comprising:  
memory including a storage device, the storage device having installed software;  
a processor coupled to the memory, the processor automatically searching in a plurality of locations for configuration information, the processor setting up the software installed on the storage device using first configuration information found in at least one of the plurality of locations.
41. The data processing system of claim 40, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
42. A data processing system, comprising:  
memory storing software;  
a network interface device;  
a processor coupled to the memory and the network interface device, the processor querying a directory server using the network interface to obtain configuration information, the processor setting up the software stored in the memory using the configuration information obtained from the directory server.

43. The data processing system of claim 42, wherein the software is a portion of an operating system of the data processing system.
44. A data processing system, comprising:  
memory storing software;  
a processor coupled to the memory, the processor automatically searching for encrypted configuration information, the processor determining a decryption key to decrypt the encrypted configuration information, the processor setting up the software installed on the memory using the decryption key and the encrypted configuration information.
45. The data processing system of claim 44, wherein the processor searches in a plurality of locations to determine the decryption key, and the plurality of locations comprise one of:  
a) a removable storage device locally attached to the data processing system;  
b) a predetermined location in a file volume in a file system of the data processing system; and  
c) a database on a remote data processing system accessible to the data processing system through a network connection.